

An Essay  
on "Constipation"  
Respectfully Submitted  
to the  
Faculty of the Homeopathic  
Medical College of  
Pennsylvania  
by  
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Pennsylvania

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# Constipation

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local inflammation. The suppression and retention  
of urine bring on a sudden paralysis of the nervous  
system; and the suppression and retention of the  
contents of the alimentary canal produce indig-  
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ache, cutaneous affections, and, in fact, a vast  
number of diseases, which though they may not  
arise directly from this source, yet, may be traced  
back to some and gradual influence. Without  
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 all a want of sufficient quantity of healthy bile,  
 are also common causes. The bile is said to be the  
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 and post mortem examinations have revealed  
 the fact, that in many cases of <sup>functional</sup> constipation  
 the bowels are found unusually small.  
 Dry atmosphere also predisposes to this affection,  
 and we find, therefore, that the inhabitants of  
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 Food is composed of two kinds of substances, possessing



different properties; one soluble and nutritious and the other insoluble and non-nutritious. The former is taken up in a great measure, by the absorbent vessels and conveyed into the blood. The latter, the non-nutritious, remains in the intestines, stimulates their action, and is subsequently expelled. The pathological state involved in this affection has been successfully alluded to by Prof. Small from the more complicated description given by J. H. Keating and Stricker, it is as follows: — 1. The presence of foreign bodies obstructing the intestinal canal. 2. Structural lesions of the intestines, which may diminish its calibre, or furnish to the watery cavities in which they may tarry. 3. Compression, Strangulation, or agination of the intestine. 4. Absence of any secreted residue after long continued diarrhoea, or when the pyloric orifice refuses a passage to the alimentary substances, when the latter are insufficient, when they are entirely assimilated. 5. Excessive contractility of certain portions of the intestinal tube.



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6. Mediet in the movement of antrachon, which allows considerable discussion, and a long series of cases of paralysis. 7. An alteration of the product of exhalation, and of secretion from the surface of the intestinal tube. It being altogether beyond my limited sphere of knowledge to enter into a detail of the various results and complications of constipation, I shall take up that portion of the subject with which I have made myself most familiar, such as the means of prevention, &c. now it appears that the first important step to be taken for the prevention of this disease, should be the use of proper food, and, as it is of vital importance, the physician who is able to point out to his patient, who is predisposed to this affection, the articles of diet he should use and discard, and to assign scientific reasons for his advice; it may be well to dwell upon this portion of the subject. Fine flour is a very common article of food, and, thus in its varied preparations, enters



6. Weakness in the movement of contraction, which allows considerable distension, and accompanies cases of Paralysis. 7. An alteration of the product of exhalation, and of secretion proceeding on the surface of the intestinal tube. It being altogether beyond my limited sphere of knowledge to enter into a detail of the various results and complications of Constipation, I shall take up that portion of the subject with which I have made myself most familiar, such as the means of prevention &c. Now it appears that the first important step to be taken for the prevention of Constipation, should be the use of proper food, and, as it is of vital importance to the physician to be able to point out to his patient, who is predisposed to this affection, the articles of diet he should use and discard, and to assign scientific reasons for his advice; it may be well to dwell upon this portion of the subject. Fine flour is a very common article of food, and, this in its varied preparations makes



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such as, Gills, corns, etc., starch, milk and  
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says "The French plan of eating enormous  
quantities of bread at dinner is unwholesome  
for most people, unless they take very violent  
exercise. In accordance with the French physi-  
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in grain bread, but with less or more bread  
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 Mr. Allston, reported to the Academy of Sciences  
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palatable and the most digestible. This grain is not used entire. It consists principally of two substances, the coverings, or part containing, and the flour or the part contained. In the early ages of the world, these were probably used together; but art has been directed to their separation, and has reduced the flour, as nearly as possible to a state of amorphous powder. Persons that are constituted find a very happy effect from the use of bran bread, for, as it before remarked, Flour, taken apart from its coverings, has a most entangling property; and it seems, that the external skin of the grain, thus thrown away, contains very important properties; and, instead of being in a great measure rejected, it should be preserved and ground up with the flour.

Mr. Milton reported to the Academy of Sciences that the bran of wheat possessed various valuable properties. Whether any of these have a purgative effect, is not known; but it has been



supposed, however, that the wheaten bran operates  
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 energy of the parts, and producing contraction  
 of the muscular fibres. Secondly, bulk is necessary  
 to keep up the action of the bowels, as has been already  
 shown in the allusion to the effect of highly nutri-  
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Stomach is free from other food, especially before breakfast and before dinner. The use of fruit after a regular satisfactory meal of meat and vegetables is a common cause of Cholera and other disorders of the bowels by bringing on acid fermentation. Fruit and vegetable produce their laxative effect by their acid and saccharine qualities, and also by the bulk of their indigestible portions. Animal food has rather a laxative effect than the reverse, perhaps, owing to the small oil intermixed with its fibres. Fatty substances are uniformly laxative, but they cannot be taken by weak stomachs. Perhaps the very best advice is give a patient subject to this derangement would be to temporize with their trouble and employ different substances under different conditions. The means employed by Old School practitioners to remedy this evil, are numerous, and it matters not whether they be Medicinal or Mechanical, they all seem to be used to force a cure instead of assisting her, & is a very



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common practice with those, who still remain ignorant of the "Great Law of Cure" to administer in cases of Constipation, what they term gentle purgatives, for instance, Magnesia, which is decidedly impudicious treatment, because, when the quality of the Magnesia is bad, and there is no certainty of always getting it good in Allopathic doses, the acids of the digestive Canal are inadequate with conversion into a salt, and, mof being thrown in upon mof, (because allopaths do business in this way), the intestines will ultimately be clogged and sometimes wholly blocked up; consequently, rendering the disease a very formidable one. As I have said above, this treatment is made use of by those ignorant of the "Great Law of Cure", perhaps, by way of being facetious, it would be well to notice the exception to the proverb "Where ignorance is (not) bliss" at least to the patient. After the apothecary shop has been ransacked in vain, among the most formidable mechanical means that have been resorted to, has been the use of Air Expellers,



and Tents of lint. In reference to Mechanical means I do not wish to be understood as damping them of any consequence in the treatment of Constipation for in many cases, they are absolutely necessary, but I most certainly deem them inadequate to the cure of this affection unassisted with medicinal means. But when the parts become paralyzed & a collection of hard feces, they should be relieved by mechanical means, and treated medicinally afterwards. In the treatment of this disease Homoeopathically, we have among the most useful remedies. Bry. Alb. Nux. Vom. Col. Mur. Opun. Plat. Sulph. Sep. Sulf. and Lye, the indications for which are: -  
 Bry. Constipation occurring in summer, in persons disposed to Rheumatism, or if it proceeds from disordered stomach.  
 Nux. Constipation attended with bad taste in the mouth, gums sore and painful, appetite failing & undergoing no change.  
 Sep. & Lye. Where Constipation is occasioned by excess of eating, or derangement of the stomach by any other cause, it is attended with loss of appetite,



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Bry. Constipation occurring in Summer, in persons disposed to Rheumatism, or if it proceeds from disordered Stomach.

Mer. Constipation attended with bad taste in the mouth, gums sore and painful, appetite appears to undergo no change.

Nux Vom. Where Constipation is occasioned by excess or eating, or deranging the Stomach by any other excess, it is attended with loss of appetite,



when the faeces are hard and dry, and voided with great forcing, sometimes streaked with blood; Lycopodium is a remedy, the indication for which is where the constipation is Chronic, and stands out as the only Symptom; it is well adapted to persons of a bilious temperament, subject to attacks of difficult digestion, and general torpor of the abdominal organs, also for constipation arising from sedentary habits.

Opium like Mez. Rom. has the indication of the Anus was closed, cardialgia, dyspepsia of the Mouth; loss of appetite, congestion of blood to the head, head-ache accompanying the feeling of heaviness in the stomach it has a heating sensation, which, together with the dyspepsia of the Mouth, seems to be the line of demarcation between it and Mez. Rom.

Platina will be found useful, where, after much vomiting on part of the Patient, he is able only to pass only small amounts, with tenesmus and a creeping sensation at the Anus after each vomiting.



Nausea, and with distension of the abdomen, with pressure and heaviness; heat in the face; determination of blood to the head, with headache; disturbed sleep, oppression, cardialgia, ill-humor; feeling as if the anus were closed, or contracted, with tenesmus.

Natron Muriacum is applicable in very obstinate cases, and where all other remedies fail, with no desire to go to stool; and when complete inaction of the Bowels has set in.

Opium like Nux Vom, has the sensation as if the anus was closed, cardialgia, dryness of the mouth; loss of appetite, congestion of blood to the head, headache accompanying the feeling of heaviness in the abdomen it has a heating sensation, which, together with the dryness of the mouth, seems to be the line of demarcation between it and Nux Vom.

Platina will be found useful, where, after much straining on part of the Patient, he is able only to pass only small lumps, with tenesmus, and a cramping sensation at the Anus after each evacuation;



complaining also of a chill, with a sensation of weakness in the abdomen, a constrictive pain in the abdomen, with pressure, pain in the stomach, and ineffectual efforts at evacuation.

Pulsatilla may be advantageously used in cases where Nux Vom is indicated, but where the patient is of a bland, phlegmatic disposition; or more particularly indicated for constipation produced by derangement of the stomach the result of eating too much fat.

Spica is indicated in the case of females, or rheumatic individuals, also in cases where Nux. Vom, or Sulph., are peculiarly indicated, but are not sufficient.

Sulphur is particularly useful in the generality of cases where the costiveness is habitual, and is decidedly so, after N. Vom. to hypochondriacal and haemorrhoidal persons, and especially, if there be frequent but ineffectual desire to go to stool; with incarceration of flatulence, distension of the abdomen.

Alumina When the constipation seems to result from an apparent absence of peristaltic motion;